

This record is a partial extract of the original cable. The full text of the original cable is not available.

S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 02 ANKARA 005222

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 09/06/2025

TAGS: [PREL](#) [MARR](#) [MOPS](#) [PINR](#) [TU](#) [IZ](#) [PKK](#)

SUBJECT: NEW DCHOD WANTS US TO TAKE ONE STEP TO DEMONSTRATE
RESOLVE AGAINST PKK IN IRAQ

Classified By: Charge d'Affaires Nancy McEldowney for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

11. (C) Summary: Turkish General Staff (TGS) Deputy Chief GEN Isik Kosaner told the Charge on Sept. 7 that he wanted to further improve US-Turkey mil-mil relations during his tenure. He pointed to the expected Sept. 8-9 visit of EUCOM CDR and CENTCOM D/CDR as a positive contribution to a relationship that is marked by frank talk that produces solutions to any problems. He called on the US to take a "small" step against the PKK in northern Iraq that the Turkish people could see. The Charge noted that expectations for the EUCOM/CENTCOM visit were unrealistically high (Kosaner agreed), and asked that TGS help lower them. Kosaner thought the new constitution would serve to fracture Iraqi unity rather than bolster it, leading to three states in about eight years, he predicted. He also offered condolences for the victims of Hurricane Katrina and evinced enthusiasm for holding an early High Level Defense Group (HLDG) meeting. End Summary.

Generals' Visit and the PKK

12. (C) During an initial office call by the Charge on Sept. 7, newly promoted and appointed TGS Deputy Chief GEN Isik Kosaner reminisced about his time at Ft Bragg and expressed condolences for the victims of Hurricane Katrina which he likened to the disaster Turkey experienced in the 1999 earthquake near Izmit. Stating that he understood the importance of the US in the world, he committed himself to work for "even better" US-Turkey mil-mil relations.

13. (C) The Charge suggested that past problems be put behind and that Kosaner focus on the future. The general averred that there were no problems between our two countries' militaries, although "I can't speak for the politicians," he said. The military-to-military relationship was marked by frank and open dialogue that could solve any problem. He pointed to the expected Sept. 8-9 visit of EUCOM Commander Gen Jones and CENTCOM Deputy Command Lt. Gen. Smith as a sign of the health of the relationship.

14. (C) For that visit, the main subject will be PKK terrorism, Kosaner continued. He believed he well understood the US position, with the need to carefully maintain balance between the various groups in Iraq. "If I were General Abizaid, I would think the same way," he said. Nonetheless, the Turkish people expected something to come out of the EUCOM/CENTCOM meeting, and TGS wanted to satisfy that expectation to restore friendly relations between the Turkish and American peoples. He understood that the US could not solve the PKK problem, but was looking for some step, such as arresting a leader or stronger public statements condemning the PKK, that the Turkish people could see and appreciate. Two months earlier, TGS had heard the US intended to track and capture PKK leaders; this would have been a good step, but so far the Turks have not seen any results.

15. (C) The Charge agreed with Kosaner that open communication was crucial to the health of the relationship. She also underscored that public expectations for the EUCOM/CENTCOM visit were unrealistically high. (Kosaner agreed.) There was no button our generals could push that would make the PKK problem go away, she said. (Kosaner again agreed.) The Charge expressed appreciation for the statements Turkish military leaders had made recently to lower expectations and urged these continue. She previewed that she would be doing the same later that day with reporters following her afternoon meeting with MFA Undersecretary Tuygan (septel).

16. (C) The Charge noted that it was possible to act against the PKK outside of Iraq, pointing to both the recent anti-PKK operation carried out by authorities in Germany and the measures that Turkey and the US might undertake in Europe that we have been discussing with MFA officials. She asked whether more might be done to secure Turkey's border with Iraq. Kosaner lamented its difficult mountainous terrain, comparing it to the difficulty the US has in stopping illegal immigrants along the Mexican border or from Cuba. He said efforts were needed on both sides. When asked who should do it on the Iraqi side given our lack of troops in the area, Kosaner asserted that there was a power vacuum there. The

Iraqi Kurdish peshmerga were friendly with the PKK. Nonetheless, the Turks talk to the Iraqi Kurds, but the area occupied by the PKK is outside their authority. The Charge suggested that this issue be further explored at the EUCOM/CENTCOM talks.

Iraq's Future Uncertain

17. (C) The Charge reminded Kosaner of Turkey and the US's common goals of a democratic, stable and unified Iraq. As we deal with the PKK issue, these goals should be kept in mind, she suggested. That is why talk about "hot pursuit" and similar operations raise concerns. Kosaner agreed that our two countries share these goals, but he was pessimistic that they could be achieved. He faulted the new Iraqi constitution's establishment of a "weak central government," stronger federal entities, and local control over new oil fields as evidence that "ethnic and religious divergence" will increase and "federalism will lead to separatism." Three new states which he expected to emerge in about eight years, would be three new problems, undermining regional stability.

18. (C) The Charge argued that the constitution would strengthen Iraq's nascent democracy and encourage people to see their future in a united country. Kosaner responded that democracy cannot be imposed, but could only be understood by "the man in the street" when the society was ready for it. "We know (the Iraqis') thinking, expectations and character" from centuries of interaction with them." The Charge countered with examples from the former Soviet Union, emphasizing that Iraqis deserved a similar chance at democracy. Success will only come with international cooperation. Kosaner agreed that Turkey's interest was making Iraq a success, and he said Turkey would continue to work for that "as long as we have a unified Iraq to talk with." The Charge ended this discussion by noting that the more Turkey and others engage the Iraqi government, the more it legitimizes the government, the better the government will become, and the more its prospects of success will improve.

HLDG

19. (C) The Charge raised the USG's interest in reviving the HLDG process. Kosaner said he was familiar with the HLDG from a previous tour at TGS headquarters. He recalled that it produced few results in those days, saying that the agenda needed to be well prepared to ensure productive talks. It can be a good channel for discussion, he said, and he wanted to see it revitalized. (Comment: We will be seeing TGS/J5 Strategy Chief MG Savas Sept. 8 to discuss possible dates.)

110. (U) The Charge was accompanied by ODC-T Chief Maj.Gen. Sutton, DATT COL Hrycaj and polmilcouns. Kosaner took the meeting alone.

Bio Note

11. (C) Despite Kosaner's stint at Ft Bragg and other international assignments, he is not comfortable in English, at least, not yet. He had little or no difficulty in English comprehension, but frequently switched to Turkish to express complex thoughts. Our impression was his English is good (not great), but rusty.
MCELDOWNEY